

St Peter's Church Stoke Fleming



Perfect weather for the Annual Rogation Service.

ANNUAL REPORT 2018

The Parochial Church Council 2018

Rector

*Revd Alison Shaw

**Ex officio*

Churchwarden

*Mr. John Dietz (Health & Safety Officer, Fabric Goods & Ornaments Officer)

Representatives on the Deanery Synod

*Mr. Peter Barker (Reader, Vice Chair and Hon Secretary)

*Mrs. Rosemary Shiffner

Representative on the Diocesan Synod

*Mrs. Rosemary Minshall (Hon Treasurer)

Elected to the Parochial Church Council

Dr. Hazel Browne

Mrs Hazel Smith (from April)

Mrs. Heather Stramik

Miss Jenny Harris (Reader)

Mrs Sarah Stevenson-Olds

Mrs. Sue Walford (Assist. Treasurer)

A Word from the Rector

Dear Friends,

On behalf of the Churchwarden and Parochial Church Council, may I warmly welcome you to the Annual meeting of St Peter's, Stoke Fleming.

In a time of continuing uncertainty, politically and environmentally, it is a joy to celebrate your Parish Church as a positive focus and rock in the village.

It is good to see the continuing growth of relationships between church and community through the Primary School, through The Friends of St Peter's, through events in the Village Hall and of course regular church activities too.

It is a huge joy to see - and hear - our bell ringers, to welcome the 5th Sunday Choir and to baptise and marry those with village connections. It is also my privilege, albeit a very sad one, to say the final words over a person loved, cherished and nurtured in his or her Village.

All of this is a reminder that we are all involved in this strange and challenging thing called LIFE. As someone said, 'This isn't a rehearsal. So live it.' Join in. Get involved. Ask questions. Seek a place of peace.

Every blessing, *Rev'd Alison (pictured by the lake of Galilee).*



Finances

Church Receipts

As expected, the Church Planned Giving scheme has increased by almost £3,000 this year, which helps our finances greatly. The Gift Aid refund is up but you won't see the full result of this until the October – December return comes in early in the New Year. You can see this does mean our collections have dropped but I would expect this to happen if more people are either giving through the Planned Giving Scheme or the Blue Envelope Scheme. We were very lucky to have generous funeral collections for the church this year. The extra Avenue Gardens event has also made a difference to our general fund raising and this year's Christmas Tree Festival produced more this year.

Church Payments

Common Fund Payment has decreased by about £600 this year due to fall in numbers. It is slightly ambivalent as to whether this is a good thing or not. Due to the warmth of the summer the keeping of the churchyard was slightly less as we did not have to have so many grass cuts. Once again we give our grateful thanks to Adrian Lloyd Edwards for his help with the churchyard and to the loam Rangers who gave us a very generous donation this last year. As this is one of the biggest expenses every year his generosity is very much appreciated. We also have a private donation every year and one from the Parish Council towards this end, all these donations are gratefully received. All other expenses are slightly higher as is to be expected but with the exception of the readers, flower arrangers and staff who only ask for the bare minimum which is very generous of them.

General Comments

This year we have achieved our aim of managing to maintain the usual church bills without our fund raising and so should be able to transfer to our CBF fund monies towards the aim of achieving a new kitchen and toilet that is suitable for disabled people in the near future.

Once again, I would like to thank Sue Walford for all the hard work she does throughout the year on reclaiming our Gift Aid Tax. As I said last year, this is done so quickly at the end of each three month period that we hardly have to wait for the money to return to us.

Rosemary Minshall, Treasurer.

Building and Maintenance

Compared to 2016 and 2017, 2018 proved to be a relatively quiet year as regards work to the church building. In January the last remnants of builders' work in connection with the tower project were completed, although a few small items such as minor decorating in the ringing chamber by the ringers on a voluntary basis still continue.

In March exceptionally heavy falls of very fine powdery snow occurred. The snow was driven by a strong east wind which caused it to drift up under the eaves and into the church. The vestry was the worst affected with snow settling along the tops of the electrical fuse boxes. It was swept up before it melted and polythene sheet was fixed over the fuse boxes temporarily to protect them against possible damage. Other areas affected were the chancel, where a light dusting of snow accumulated on the choir pews and in the pulpit, and at the west end of the church in the gallery.



*St Peter's
in the snowstorm on
Sunday morning,
March 18.*

*The 11 o'clock
Service went ahead!*

Once a thaw began it was found that the mains water pipe outside on the north east corner of the church had frozen and a joint had been forced apart, but fortunately the repair was straightforward.

In May the tower clocked stopped for a short time. The Cumbria Clock Company investigated and carried out the annual service. No apparent reason could be found for the stoppage and the clock has continued without any further problems.

Churchyard.

The churchyard continued to be cut regularly, on the south side by the contractor Chris Reeve, and on the north side voluntarily by Adrian Lloyd-Edwards. As in previous years we are extremely grateful to Adrian for carrying out this work.

Organists

Mike Dodsworth continued to play free of charge on most first Sundays in each month. In general Carol Warboys played on the second and third Sundays of each month and on some fourth Sundays; Jon Oliverio played on the remaining fourth Sundays. Others who played occasionally were Bob Barsby and Karen White. We thank them all for their contribution to our services.

Bellringing

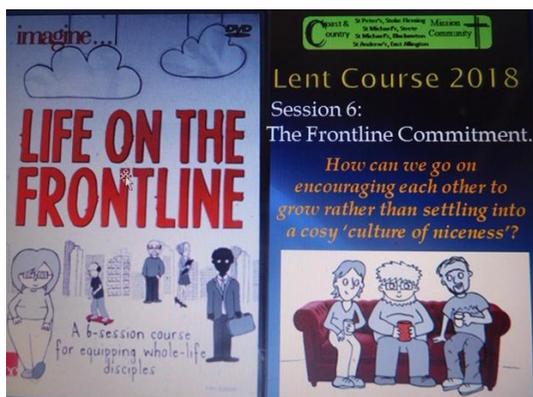
Thanks to the commitment and regular attendance of our ringers we have seldom missed ringing for Sunday services and we continue to hold regular weekly practices, often attended by ringers from elsewhere.

In September we hosted the annual eight-bell ringing festival of the Devon Association of Ringers and thanks go to our Rector, Alison, for conducting the service and to Janet Dietz for playing the organ. One of the great traditions of these events is the ringers' tea and the ladies of the Mothers' Union and their helpers did a splendid job in providing an excellent tea for the sixty or so people present. Thanks also to Nick and Gwen Teage for accommodating the judges for the afternoon.

Finally, I must thank Nick Teage and Peter Bailey who unlock and lock the church every day so that visitors may enter freely, and anyone else not specifically mentioned who has contributed in any way to the running of the church.

John Dietz, Churchwarden.

Lent Course



On Tuesday evenings in Lent we joined with the other churches in the Benefice to consider 'Life on the Frontline' as Christ's disciples: a challenging course which promoted some good discussion and reflection. It was a pleasure to welcome some friends from *Buckland Tout Saints* and *E.Portlemouth*.

Peter Barker

St Peter's and Stoke Fleming Primary School

By the end of 2018 the *Open the Book* team had presented dramatized Bible stories in the School Hall for 6 years, two complete cycles. The team receives a warm welcome each Monday morning and *OtB* remains as popular as ever with pupils always eager to participate and saying how much they look forward to it. The team enjoys fun and many laughs in rehearsal and earnestly prays that 'seed will be sown' in many young hearts. Once again members of the team were asked to lead the School's annual end of term Christingle Service in church. This year we included our own dramatization of the *Bible Society's* new Christmas Children's booklet, *The Mystery of the New Noisy Neighbour* as well as giving each of the children a copy as a present from the Church.



The Mystery of the New Noisy Neighbour

Mouse (Heather), Sheep (Sarah), Donkey (Hazel) and Camel (Joan) join in the final line: "*Emmanuel, God is with us!*"

Staff and pupils form a nativity tableau.

St Peter's also welcomed the children, teachers and a host of parents and grandparents for the School's Harvest Celebration in October and traditional Carol Service in December. 3 members of St Peter's, Revd Alison, Sarah and Peter (until July) were members of the Local Governing Body within *Education South West*.

Peter Barker

Looking Ahead

Sarah Cracknell of the *Growing the Rural Church Project* met with the PCC twice with a view to running some sessions for church members and then a community consultation. Members of the PCC also met the new Church Architect, Julie Boulby, to start considering possible provision of an accessible toilet and new kitchen.

St Peter's and the Wider Church

We participated in the *Christians Together in Dartmouth and District* Easter presentation at the Dartmouth Bandstand on a rather wet and very windy Saturday. Revd Alison and Rosemary Minshall have served on the CTIDD Committee. From Ascension to Pentecost we participated in the wonderful global prayer wave '*Thy Kingdom Come*', with prayer stations prepared by Hazel Browne and Hazel Smith.



At Woodleigh Deanery's Celebration Service with Bishop Nick, held this year at St Michael's Stokenham, we were reminded that we are all 'branches' in Jesus the true vine; each parish received a symbolic vine leaf. Synod members, and others who are always welcome for the Deanery Synod talks, heard Marian Carson on the *Growing the Rural Church Project*, Gill Ford on the *Children's Society*, and Julia Halpin on the *Parish Nursing Scheme*. Neil Williams, Diocesan Finance Director, conducted a consultation on Common Fund Assessment. Rosemary Minshall represented the Deanery at Diocesan Synod and Peter Barker (Deanery Lay Chair) at the Archidiaconal Council.



4 members of the congregation (pictured at the Garden Tomb) joined a wonderful pilgrimage to the Holy Land led by Revd Alison in September.

St Peter's Charitable Giving

We aim to give roughly 10% of our income to 'good causes'. In addition to the collections on Christian Aid Sunday, Sea Sunday, Harvest Festival, Remembrance and Christingle going to the usual recipients, the PCC decided to continue to support the same good causes as in 2017: Devon Historic Churches Trust, Salvation Army, Bible Society, Open Doors (supporting persecuted Christians), Scripture Union (supporting Street children in Peru), Youth Genesis (working with young people in Torbay and Dartmouth), CMS (for Grace and Festo in Tanzania), Medicins sans Frontiers and Stoke Fleming Village Magazine. There was also the big donation from the Christmas Tree Festival to the Devon Air Ambulance. St Peter's continued to contribute to the Dartmouth Food Bank, with a special effort during Advent.

Mothers' Union

We started the year with our Reports and Accounts, followed by Holy Communion. This was followed in February by our annual lunch at the Stoke Lodge Hotel. On March 15th we held a Lady Day Service at St Peter's Church when our friends from other groups joined us. In April we held our meeting in the Church with a small bring and buy table to boost our funds; this was a Members' afternoon. In May we had a very interesting talk with slides about Ethiopia given by Peter Barker, followed the next month by a flower arranging demonstration by Jenny Harris.

July was a talk by Caroline Luff about Fasts and Feasts. In September we went to Dodbrook for a talk and in October we had a Deanery meeting at the Hall with a talk by Nichola Johnson. November was an interesting talk by Carolyn Williams from *Rowcroft* and December our usual tea and Carols in St Peter's. So ended another eventful and interesting year.

Sue Walford

Church Flowers

We are all so grateful for the beautiful flowers and for the special Harvest and Christmas decorations which adorn our Church so wonderfully. Thank you to all concerned, and especially to Jenny Harris who 'does' the flowers with such skill week after week. Some of her lovely poppies for Remembrance are pictured. Thank you too to Shirley who faithfully does the coffee; and to Sue and the MU who again organised a most enjoyable lunch after the Harvest Festival Service.



The Hiding Place



On June 8th we welcomed back to St Peter's *Oddments Theatre Company* who presented *The Hiding Place*, the story of Corrie Ten Boom the Dutch Christian woman who defied the Nazis. It was an engrossing, powerful and inspiring drama, a story of faith, courage and ultimately of hope. Creative and versatile sets, deft doubling up of parts and some very heartfelt acting helped to convey the cost and fulfilment of sacrificial discipleship in most challenging situations.

Friends of St. Peter's

At the AGM in April 2018 our Treasurer, Rick Kemp, explained that though FoSP was authorised by HMRC to collect Gift Aid, it was not currently registered with the Charity Commission. At the AGM in 2017 it had been suggested by member Graham Fice that full registration should be investigated; it was discovered that this was a fairly straightforward on-line process except only that our Constitution had to be reviewed in order to meet the Charity Commission standard format. The reviewed Constitution was circulated with the 2018 AGM Calling Notice and was adopted at the meeting, and full registration as a charity with the Charity Commission has now been completed. It was also confirmed at the AGM that the Friends had taken the necessary steps to meet the requirements of the Data Protection Act for their members.

Projects under discussion in 2018-9 have included work on the church footpaths, work on more of the windows and also replacing the tower flagpole, but as I write (February 2019) we are awaiting reports to enable us to decide which to prioritise. Lack of a settled project has meant a respite from active fund raising during 2018 which has been greatly appreciated by the Committee, though this will of course change once we have a new focus. It is a huge benefit that we are being supported by the regular donations of our loyal members, and a great pleasure to know that in turn we are supporting the village by helping to maintain the quality of its church.

Rosemary Shiffner, Chairman

Remembrance Sunday

There was an extra large turnout on Sunday, November 11th, for the 100th Anniversary of the armistice at the end of the 1st World War. After the



Service in Church with the 2 minutes silence at 11 o'clock, everyone gathered at the War Memorial where six wreaths were laid, including one by four senior boys from the Village School. We were blessed with lovely weather for what everyone felt was a very special and moving occasion.

St. Peter's Visiting Group

Members of the visiting group keep an eye on a number of elderly people within the parish and we still visit one who went into a residential home last year. Sally Green and Heather Stramik take Holy Communion once a month to *Beacon House* where several of our old congregation are now living. Sally also does this in *Hyne Town House* where we also have old parishioners.

The Senior Citizen's lunch is still taking place in Stoke Lodge Hotel. We thank them very much for looking after us. Again we have one or two people who have joined us some of whom are men so we have more of a mix now. It is lovely that in February the Mothers' Union join us.



Sadly the Senior Citizens cream tea in the school has come to an end and it was because of it being so early in the afternoon. We know school hours made this impossible to be at any other time but we do miss seeing the children and being able to talk to them.

We are still sending out bereavement cards for two years, baptismal ones and small gifts for five and wedding anniversary ones for a year after the weddings we have in church.

Last year we reported that we would like to be able to find a way of reaching out to the younger people within the parish that need our help. We are lucky enough to have a member of the congregation that works in the Youth Club in Dartmouth and we are glad to be able to hold her in our prayers.

Rosemary Minshall



Village Prayer

A small group went out and about two evenings in Holy Week to pray specifically for Stoke Fleming, its residents – people and homes, their work and leisure – its businesses, facilities, farms and animal; its school and its council; its visitors and transport.

Christmas Tree Festival

We seemed to have more visitors than ever this year at the Christmas Tree Festival, on 7th, 8th, 9th December; perhaps it was because of the political situation, but more people seemed really thrilled to be there and that Christmas was coming and the Festival was their first taste of it – and a totally Brexit-free zone!

Our 2018 innovation was a wonderful backcloth, painted by Mike Browne, for the nativity figures we had introduced to the glass balcony in 2017, but something unexpected happens at each Festival; as ever the quality of the trees themselves continued to be outstanding, but it was the first time we had the very damp experience of receiving trees which had been delivered in a deluge – and it is amazing how heavy they were, and how much water they brought in, even after being firmly shaken outside the church!



As always, the Festival could not take place without the involvement of so many volunteers: including the charity and prayer trees there were 29 trees in the church this year, and as you can imagine, the decorations for each tree involves several people (ages from pre-school to well over 80). Once one includes all who help set up, steward, and provide refreshments for the Festival – and even if only three people are involved in decorating each tree - the total must be close to 100 people, and they in turn reach out to the many hundreds more who come from the local area, as well as visitors from much further afield. It is very rewarding that the Festival has become such a firm fixture in the Village calendar, and it was certainly pleasing this year that the Stoke Lodge Hotel, the Village Post Office and the Green Dragon pub all used the Festival as a 'hook' to host events over the same weekend, providing a great boost to other village enterprises.

Our charity this year was, like other Stoke Fleming organisations, the Devon Air Ambulance, particularly significant for this area which is establishing a night landing site in the village. We were very pleased to be able to send them a cheque for £725 and to receive an appreciative letter in reply.

Shirley and Rokie

What the Church Means to Me

1 Corinthians Chapter 12 : *Christ is like a single body which has many parts. All of you are Christ's body and each one is a part of it.*

I read this reading in the service last week and it reminded me that we all are part of the church, all different with special skills.

I love reading, especially 1930s murder mystery novels. On my walk down the village to church on Sundays, I know I am on time because I hear the lovely sound of St. Peter's bells. They lift my spirits and they remind me of the village of St Marymead where Miss Marple lives. A number of the dramatizations of Agatha Christie's stories that include Miss Marple involve the sound of Church bells. They also bring to mind a novel by Dorothy L Sayers called *The Nine Tailors*, a story set around a bell ringing contest. I had no experience of Church bells until I came to Stoke Fleming and really enjoy listening to their music.

I haven't been attending St Peter's for long (just over a year) but the welcome I receive there has been wonderful; everyone has made me feel part of the Church. The services are uplifting and the building gives you the feeling that you are in the presence of God. I love to sing so being asked to sing in the choir on special services has also made it extra special for me. I don't come from an Anglican background so I found the service very different at first, but now I find the worship really inspiring and it sets me up for the week ahead.

Church isn't just Sundays and what I love about St Peter's is all the different things the church and the congregation are involved in every day and week and month of the year. This has been emphasised by our recent "*Growing the Rural Church*" discussions. This Annual Report mentions many things but there is a lot more to tell. Yes we are custodians of a lovely historic Church but we are also part of a community and we try to look after and help those around us. This is where we need our different skills and gifts to all work together as the many parts of Christ's body in his Church and in our local community. I'm not going to try to mention all the things we do or will do in the future but I know we will move forward continuing to serve God and our Community.

Hazel Smith